DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 468 EA 020 249

AUTHOR Lueders, Wayne J.
TITLE Recruiting and Selecting a Superintendent.
INSTITUTION Iowa Association of School Boards, Des Moines.
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 60p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Sales, Iowa Association of School Boards, Insurance Exchange Building, 505 5th Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309-2316 ($9.00; quantity discounts).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Qualifications; *Administrator Selection; *Board of Education Policy; *Board of Education Role; Consultants; Elementary Secondary Education; Interviews; Recruitment; School Districts; School Support; *Superintendents
IDENTIFIERS Iowa

ABSTRACT

This manual is a resource document and guide for school boards to use in recruiting and selecting a superintendent. The material provides a basis to first identify the critical decisions that need to be made and, second, to consider alternatives or options to each of the major decision areas. The following factors are discussed: (1) the board's role in recruiting; (2) the public's involvement; (3) alternative selection resources such as consultants; (4) a planning outline sample; (5) an evaluation of school district's needs; (6) qualifications for superintendent; (7) internal promotion possibilities; (8) recruitment of candidates; (9) screening process; (10) the interview; (11) community visits; (12) the selection process; and (13) Iowa Public Records Law/Open Meetings Law. Appended are a superintendent job description and forms for application, assessment, and contracts. (SI)

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Recruiting and Selecting a Superintendent

EA 020 249

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Recruiting and Selecting a Superintendent

Prepared by
Wayne J. Lueders
Associate Executive Director
Management Service

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is furnished with the understanding that the Association is not engaged in rendering legal or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

The Iowa Association of School Boards offers a 33-minute VHS videotape on interviewing superintendent candidates as a supplement to this manual. The videotape demonstrates and reviews basic techniques of the superintendent interview, and is available for loan from the IASB. For details on how to obtain this tape, contact the IASB offices, Insurance Exchange Building, #927, 505 5th Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309-2316; (515) 288-1991.

Published by

The Iowa Association of School Boards
Insurance Exchange Building
505 5th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-2316

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this manual is to provide board members with a comprehensive overview of the recruiting and superintendent selection process. The review of this material will provide board members with a basis to first identify the critical decisions that need to be made during a selection process and second, determine alternatives or options to each of the major decision areas. Each board member is encouraged to review the entire document before the board of directors begins to make decisions on how it will proceed in the selection process.

Dear School Board Member:

Selecting a superintendent is one of the most important tasks of a school board. Your participation in the school board's decision to select a superintendent has the potential to positively affect the educational system for many years.

The selection process should be a challenging and very rewarding experience for each board member. No one of your school board may have had the experience of hiring a superintendent. Yet the result of your search and selection will have a very significant impact on the school and community. Further, the board will design and implement a complex process without the counsel of its chief advisor — the incumbent superintendent. The superindendent selection process, by its very nature, creates open, participatory group decision making which in most cases results in establishing a clear focus of the school board's function.

This manual is designed as a resource document and guide for school boards to use in developing procedures for recruiting and selecting a superindendent. This manual provides suggested means of addressing the various functions of the selection process. These suggestions, if followed carefully and adapted to local conditions by a school board, should result in a smooth, successful selection process.

For additional information and assistance with any phase of the selection process, contact the Iowa Association of School Boards at the Insurance Exchange Building, 5th and Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa. Telephone (515)288-1991.

Sincerely,

T. E. Davidson
Executive Director

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank all the contributing members of a selected panel invited to review and critique my initial draft of this document.
The panel members listed in alphabetical order included:

Edgar H. Bittle, General Counsel, IASB,

Dr. Ross Engel, Professor, Department of Educational Administration, Iowa State University

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Dr. George Kizer, Director, Educational Placement Office, Iowa State University

Kelly Schlapkohl, Executive Director, Iowa Association of School Administrators

Their voluntary efforts and timely comments were greatly appreciated.

Wayne Lueders
Associate Executive Director
Iowa Association of School Boards

The Board's Role in Recruiting and Selecting

Every superintendent vacancy has a unique set of factors surrounding it. Just as the educational needs of districts vary, so do the needs of the board of directors. The board members should recognize that the superintendent selection process is more than a one-way process of the board hiring the "best" candidate who submits an application, but rather is a two-way process through which the board and the candidate are attempting to make a selection or match that best serves both parties' individual needs and objectives.

Hiring a superintendent is the most important decision a board can be called upon to make. Implicit in this statement is the fact that the quality of the decision is to a great extent related to the quality of the plan developed by the board for the recruitment and selection process. A well-executed plan should eliminate the need for quick and unreasoned decisions along the way which always pose a threat to effective results. The board is hiring an individual who will serve in the three roles of chief executive officer to the board, educational leader for the staff and community, and chief advisor to the board.

The entire educational community will be affected by the choice of the board. Regardless of the process used, the board should remember that it is legally responsible for the final selection. The board may use a number of different methods in the selection process, but the board must not in appearance or fact delegate the final selection to any other person or group.

Selection is an opportunity

The selection process offers the board an opportunity to assess the current educational climate of the district. The board may decide whether it should attempt to maintain the status quo of the district or to emphasize changing the leadership style, redirecting the educational priorities, and changing the image of the district. Major changes such as these can be accomplished by the selection process while avoiding the confusion and emotional problems of attempting to change the leadership style of an existing administrative structure.

The selection process also provides an opportunity for the individual board members to reassess their individual and collective roles as board members. Boards that are experiencing internal conflict or strife may have a difficult time in making decisions. Each board member must freely and candidly discuss the process and candidates. Board members should strive

for consensus at each step of the process. The board should agree that the final decision on selection of the new superintendent will be made by consensus and not by using a conflict-avoiding technique such as a majority vote.

The entire process will be time consuming. An effective selection requires the concerted efforts of the board members. If the board does not take the necessary time to do the job right the first time, it may be faced with a second opportunity very quickly. Certain phases of the process may be shortened by the board, but only after careful consideration of the desirability and risks of each change.

The entire selection process should encourage development of unity and should build support both among the board members and community for the individual who is finally selected. If the public views the selection process as valid and logical, it will more readily accept the final selection. If the public views the process with mistrust and skepticism, then the individual chosen in the final selection may have a difficult time of being accepted by the public.

This process begins with a careful assessment of the assets and liabilities and challenges facing the district. This assessment must include the needs of the educational system and those of the board. The board's ability to assess the district's needs and accurately interpret those needs into the selection criteria will help to determine the success of the district's programs through the early years of the superintendent's tenure.

A secondary factor that must be considered at the time of determining the criteria is the salary and fringe benefit package that the school is able and willing to offer. Further discussion of the salary and fringe benefits can be found on pages 26 and 42.

Public Involvement

Boards are encouraged to provide an opportunity for meaningful involvement in the selection process by the various publics served by the school district. These publics may include parents, citizens, business people, civic organizations, students, staff members and professional people. An important reason for this involvement is to broaden the board's understanding of the community. If one of the underlying objectives of the selection process is to build a broad base of support for the acceptance of the superintendent, then the board needs to involve the public to allow a feeling of sharing in the final decision. The fact the board provided an opportunity for public involvement may encourage public support for the new superintendent after hiring.

Involve the public

There are a number of formal techniques boards may use to involve various publics in the selection process. Each technique listed below requires varying amounts of time and expertise to organize and manage effectively. After careful study, a board may choose to use any or all of the techniques listed.

A. Written Statements — The board may invite the public to submit in writing any ideas, suggestions or recommendations on desirable qualities of the new superintendent. The deadline for receiving the statements should be coordinated with completion of a brochure or the development of the criteria check list for use in the screening and interviewing process. Most boards use this technique.

B. Board Meeting/Public Hearing — The board may designate a portion of one of its regular open meetings to give citizens the opportunity to speak about the desired qualities of a new superintendent. In larger communities, the board may consider holding special meetings, located in different areas of the district. As an alternative to the board conducting the meeting or hearing, a consultant may be hired to chair the meeting(s) and provide a written summary report to the board. Whoever is in charge of the meeting or hearing must focus presenters' remarks on positive and desirable characteristics of a superintendent rather than on negative or undesirable characteristics. Care must be taken in a district experiencing

difficulties to prevent the meeting from becoming merely a complaint session about the outgoing superintendent. It would be unusual for a superintendent not to have a few critics but the purpose of the meeting is to assist the board in selecting criteria to use in recruiting and selecting a new superintendent. If the district/community is experiencing serious internal conflict, the public hearing may be very desirable. The board should allow ample time for public input. The more formalized public hearing is used less frequently than simply setting time aside during a regular or special board meeting.

C. Survey — The board may request the public to complete a survey form which contains a listing of various superintendent selection criteria. The form may be distributed in the local newspaper, shopper or school newsletter. Only a very few districts have used this technique. The apparent concerns would be in the survey design and controlling the responses, i.e. one person completing more than a single form.

D. Group Meetings — The entire board, a group of board members or individual board members who were specifically designated by the board may meet with various groups of people at separate meetings. Individual meeting reports may be made to the entire board at a subsequent board meeting. Care must be taken to assure the numbers of potential group meetings are manageable and groups are not overlooked. Be aware, the entire board may not have the opportunity to hear all group discussions, and individuals who do not belong to a group may feel excluded. Finally, the sophistication of the presentation of a group may have a disproportionate influence on the board.

E. Ad Hoc Committees — The board may appoint an ad hoc advisory committee typically ranging from nine to 15 people to perform any one of three separate functions: 1) develop recommended selection criteria, 2) screen the applicants based on the board adopted criteria, 3) interview the candidates. Generally, if the district decides to use a committee, only one committee is appointed and performs only one of the functions listed above.

1. Criteria Committee — Boards that appoint an ad hoc committee usually have the committee develop a recommended list of criteria for the board to use in the brochure and screening phases. The committee should have a broad base of support in the community including private business, parents, civic groups, professional and classified school employees with building level representation, PTA, political subdivisions and students. One member of the board should be on the committee. Consideration should be given to female and minority representation on the committee. Each committee member serves at the discretion of the board. The committee should select its own chairperson.

The committee should have a clear understanding of its purpose, function and timelines. For example, the directions from the board to the committee could be as follows:

> *The purpose of the advisory committee is make a report on recommendations on qualities the committee determines to be most important in the next superintendent for the school district. The report will be presented to the board of directors within six (6) weeks of appointment. The acceptance of the report by the board will officially dissolve the committee. The board will provide clerical assistance. The committee will be guided by the provisions of the open meetings law, Chapter 21,* Code of Iowa.

When the report from the advisory committee is presented to the board, the motion should be made to "accept" rather than "adopt" it. This will allow the board to review the report and modify it if necessary.

2. Screening Committee — The board may choose to appoint a screening committee. Generally, screening committees of lay citizens and school employees are not used in screening applicants. The function of screening applications involves the review of confidential documents such as transcripts, credentials and letters of recommendation. Typically these are only reviewed by board (employer) or the board's designee such as a consultant. A screening committee would need to receive more assistance and training to function than would a criteria committee.

This assistance would include the development of simulated application materials, check lists and a "mock" screening work session. The board needs to have complete trust in the capabilities of whoever screens the applications down to a final group of candidates to consider for an interview. The board can ill afford to have excellent applicants overlooked by an incomplete screening process.

3. Interviewing Committee — The board may decide to use a committee to interview candidates. The interviews would be in addition to and separate from the interview of the candidate by the board. If the board wishes to use this technique it may wish to establish the following ground rules:

a. the board is responsible for making the final decision,
b. the committee will use the criteria adopted by the board,
c. the committee will focus on certain areas — specific questions,
d. the committee members will report individually in writing to the project coordinator within one hour after each interview,
e. the individual reports to the board should identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, (seek specific objective comments, not subjective endorsements).
f. the committee member will be discouraged from rank-ordering the candidates
g. the committee will not have any veto power of a candidate.
h. the committee's involvement is to provide additional information to the board on which candidate will work best with the board and not with the committee.

Spread the word

If the board wants to involve the public, it must publicize the fact through newspapers, media and community organizations. If a screening committee or interviewing committee comprised of lay citizens is to be used, it should be stated in a brochure. A committee should only be used if the board determines value in using a committee and sufficient time and expertise is available to select and educate the committee on its function. The board should be cautious of groups or coalitions which attempt to exert undue influence on the selection of committee members or final recommendations of the committee.

The board should consider the following groups for inclusion in the interview process.

*1. Board
*2. Administrators (but not the outgoing superintendent)
*3. Faculty representatives — chosen by the board and not the association or union
4. Students
5. Citizens — chosen by the board
*6. Board secretary

The above groups with an asterisk (*) must be involved in the process. Typically each group will conduct its own interview. All groups will use the same evaluation criteria (instrument) to record individual reactions and assessment of each candidate. The completed instruments will be given to the project coordinator to tabulate and to assemble the results for the board.

Other Important Resources

Consultants

An alternative for a board to organize and manage the entire selection process locally is to seek the services of a consultant experienced in the process of recruiting and selecting a public school superintendent. The board may consider hiring a consultant who will work with the board in any or all of the separate functions of the selection process. Some boards have a greater need for the use of a consultant than other boards. A board should seriously consider the use of a consultant if any of the following statements are true:

1. Board members are unwilling or unable to commit the time to undertake the total process.
2. Board members are relatively inexperienced and lack understanding of their role.
3. Board members are split on basic educational goals.
4. Board members lack knowledge or skills necessary to screen candidates.
5. Board members plan to undertake a nationwide search. Note: the extent of the search need not be a deterrent if other factors are acceptable.

In addition, the board must weigh the acceptance (or lack of it) by the patrons of the district toward spending school district funds for a consultant. A consultant fee will usually range from $2,000 up to 30 percent of the anticipated first year salary; the exact amount is most influenced by the range of service requested and the nature of the search process. The board should request the consultant to submit a firm fee statement, which **includes** expenses. If the proposal is stated as a fee plus expenses, control of final charges is removed from the board.

Selecting a consultant

If the board is considering the possibility of hiring a consultant, it should invite two or three consultants to a board meeting to discuss services offered, timelines and fees. The consultant should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the selection process to the board and provide a written proposal for the board's consideration. The initial contact with the board is typically free of any cost to the board. Remember, the focus on hiring a consultant should be on the experience and services to be provided. The lowest priced consultant may not possess the skills needed by the board.

What can a consultant do for you? Services commonly offered include any or all of the following:

- develop an overall plan including timelines,
- assess the educational climate of the district,
- develop recommended selection criteria for board approval,
- prepare brochure, application form and vacancy announcement,
- conduct reference checks of applicants,
- solicit/recruit qualified individuals to apply,
- screen applicants based on board approved criteria,
- recommend specified number of final candidates to the board,
- contact unsuccessful candidates,
- develop potential interview questions for board's consideration,
- mediate any snags which develop in the interview process,
- assist in negotiations of contract terms before selection is announced.

The consultant's fee will be based in part on the number of services provided to the board.

The consultant's professional reputation should be impeccable, showing impartiality in the recommendations made in previous selection projects. The board must have complete trust in the individual's ability to perform the tasks. The board should conduct a reference check on the consultants

from a list of school districts in which the consultant has recently worked and the names and telephone numbers of board members to contact.

Board action to retain the consultant must be taken in an open session of the board meeting. The board minutes will record the action including the fee. The consultant's written proposal should be incorporated by reference into the minutes.

Once the board decides to hire a consultant, a contract should be drafted specifying the fees, based on satisfactory completion of the services, a payment schedule and a termination clause to allow the board an option to end the agreement at any time. The contract should require the consultant to deliver all letters of applicants and related materials for each candidate to the board at the time the field of candidates is narrowed to the final group of candidates. All applications legally are the property of the school board and should be retained for two years.

When the consultant reports the names of the candidates recommended for further consideration, he/she should **not** be asked to place the individuals in a rank order. For example, if the consultant is asked to narrow the field of applications down to the top ten candidates, the board should then review the application materials and additional information to determine which candidates to invite in for an interview. Typically the board will interview five to seven candidates. The remaining candidates, those in the second group not invited for an initial interview, will be considered only if the board is not satisfied with the result of the initial interviews. It is important for the board to determine who it wants to invite to the interviews.

An option which has been used by a few districts is to hire more than one consultant to work as a team of two or three in the selection process. This will broaden the base of expertise and offset the concern of potential partiality of a single consultant.

In summary, the use of a consultant does not relieve the board of any legal responsibility in the selection process. The use of a consultant will allow the board to concentrate its efforts on the key decision making areas including the interviews and final selection. The consultant adds a dimension to the process of being able to recruit applicants to the position who might not otherwise be aware of or attracted to the district. The consultant provides added expertise in the area of evaluating credentials, reference verification and out-of-state contacts. When considering the cost of a consultant or outside assistance, keep in mind that a poor superintendent selection may result in long-range costs to the district in terms of dollars, time and lost educational opportunity.

The Incumbent Superintendent

It is unwise to place the incumbent superintendent in any decision-making role in the selection process. Even in the best of circumstances, the departing superintendent should not be placed in the uncomfortable position of reviewing or recommending a replacement from among a group of peers, colleagues and friends in administrative positions. Remember, the new superintendent will be working with the board, not the departing superintendent!

The departing superintendent can provide basic administrative supervision in developing the brochure, the check lists, and correspondence. Application materials should be sent to the project coordinator rather than the departing superintendent. If the superintendent is departing under less than ideal circumstances, that individual would probably have no direct involvement with the process.

Exit interview

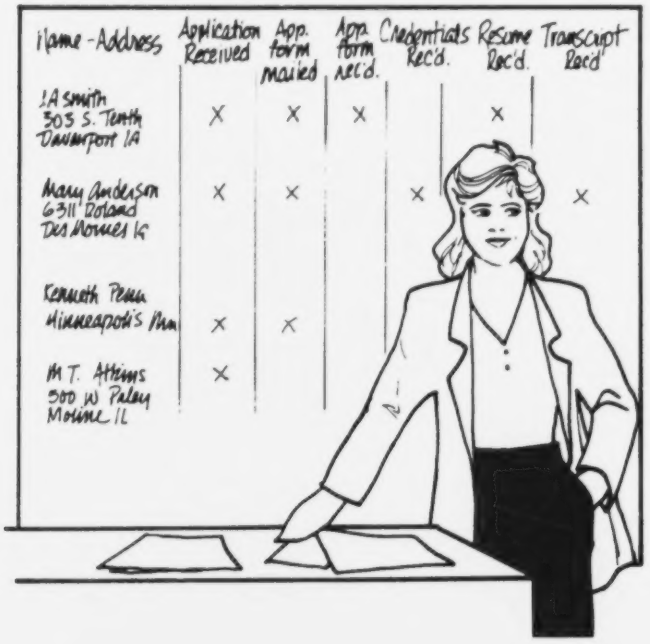
The board should conduct an exit interview with the incumbent superintendent, regardless of the circumstances, to identify and assess the short-term and long-term strengths and challenges of the district. The interview will hopefully confirm the situation as the board currently perceives it. If however, the interview uncovers new facts, it is best to address those early in the planning process. This information will be very helpful when the board begins to establish the criteria for the new superintendent.

Project Coordinator

The board should appoint a project coordinator from the local central office staff. This individual will usually be the board secretary. This person is responsible directly to the board relative to this project. The responsibilities of the project coordinator may vary depending on whether a consultant is hired.

Project coordinator duties

Assuming a consultant is not hired, the person will handle all correspondence including announcement mailings to placement offices, newspapers and follow-up correspondence to applicants. The individual will receive all applications, develop a system to record all communications, assemble applicant folders and arrange interviews. The person will provide information to the candidates, assist in the drafting of the brochure and application form, and supervise the project budget.



If a consultant is hired, responsibility for the above tasks will be determined by the board. It is probably best that all application materials be sent to the project coordinator, even in those instances in which a consultant is retained. The project coordinator can then maintain a roster of candidates and forward the applications to the consultant. See Appendix D.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to have the requested information on file by the stated deadline. Any folder which is incomplete should be excluded from the screening process. A sample work form can be found in the Appendix E.

Legal Counsel

Additionally, the board should meet with its attorney to review open meetings and public record law requirements and to review the terms and conditions of the superintendent's contract. There should be a clear understanding from the beginning of the board's legal responsibility and the board may request an opinion upon which it may rely to hold closed sessions when requested to do so by applicants. In negotiating a contract, the terms of the contract or parameters should be understood well in advance of the final selection process to avoid embarassing delays or misunderstandings. Contract terms that should be considered include the list on page 42.

Outline Of The Selection Process —

The superintendent recruiting and selection process includes four general steps:

1. Identify present leadership needs of the district,
2. Develop the largest possible group of qualified candidates,
3. Identify the most able candidates based on district needs, and
4. Select and employ the best candidate available.

The timeline

The selection process beginning with the initial planning session will take from a minimum three months up to a year. The typical search timeline starting with the receipt of the resignation is from four to six months. The plan developed by the board will depend primarily on when the incumbent superintendent submits a resignation or when the vacancy occurs. Some boards receive a resignation more than one year in advance of the effective date of the retirement. Some retiring superintendents wait as late as January to submit the resignation effective July 1 because he/she wishes to keep the "lame duck" time period to a minimum. Other boards receive no advanced time to prepare for a mid-year vacancy due to a personal tragedy or resignation. The board should be reassured that no matter when or how the vacancy occurs, it needs to allow a sufficient amount of time to plan and conduct an effective process for filling the vacancy. The board should not rush through the process.

If necessary, the board can name an interim or acting superintendent to perform the duties until a new superintendent is selected and available to report to work. The acting superintendent needs to have the proper certification for the position. Typically either a central office staff member, principal, a retired superintendent in the area or an administrator from a neighboring district is appointed to the interim position.

The following is a list of functions or tasks that are normally included in the process.

A planning sample

TASK	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Planning		
Develop proposed outline for selection process		
Decide whether to use a consultant		
Decide how to involve the public		
Build a budget		
Assign project coordinator		
Assess educational strengths and challenges		
Develop qualifications, criteria		
Determine salary range and fringe benefits		
Determine use of and develop application form		
Develop a brochure		
Announcement		
*Announce vacancy including application deadline		
Screening		
Develop screening check list/rating sheet		
Determine who will screen the applications		
*Close applications (30 days minimum from announcement)		
Screen applications narrowing field		
Check all references of selected candidates		
*Contact eliminated candidates (1 to 3 weeks from close of applications)		
Interview		
Develop questions for interview		
Develop checklist for evaluating interviews		
*Interview best candidates (1 to 2 weeks following completion of the screening)		
Community Visit		
Develop check list for community visit		
Visit top 2 or 3 candidates' communities/districts (1 to 2 weeks following interviews)		
Final Selection		
Follow-up interview of top candidate(s) (optional)		
Decide - rank order top candidates (1 week from community visit)		
Negotiate a contract and transition provisions		
*Contact eliminated candidates		
*Vote and announcement of new superintendent		
*New superintendent on the job		

The tasks noted with an asterisk (*) represent the key decision points in the process which are important to both the board and candidates. If the board plans to include a timeline in the brochure, it should list specific dates on these key decision points.

Every board will need to develop its own plan including critical target dates. The first step is to gather information and options available to the board on the various functions or tasks that need to be completed. As the board develops a time schedule it may be helpful to start at the end of the process and work backwards. For example, identify when the new superintendent will report for duty (typically July 1) and work through each preceding step to arrive at the beginning date.

It is possible to complete the selection process in two months, from the date of the first announcement through the announcement of the new superintendent. This assumes the board has satisfactorily completed the planning phase prior to the announcement.

One author summarized the selection process this way *(see* **Wynn 27** *in the bibliography)*:

Ten Commandments in Selecting a New Superintendent

1. Thou shalt not take the incumbent's name in vain.
2. Thou shalt commit sufficient resources to finding a new superintendent.
3. Thou shalt advertise for superintendent candidates.
4. Thou shalt clarify the salary.
5. Thou shalt specify the selection criteria.
6. Thou shalt concentrate during screening and evaluation.
7. Thou shalt honor thy candidates' confidentiality.
8. Thou shalt not get everybody into the decision.
9. Thou shalt not interview casually.
10. Thou shalt have consensus in thy choice.

Know Yourself

The board cannot decide who it wants to hire until it collectively knows what it needs to hire. The first step in setting the goals and establishing criteria for the selection process is for the board to study itself and the needs of the district. Questions such as the following are a good place to start: 1) What are the major challenges facing the district in the next three to five years? 2) What are the district's strengths and weaknesses? 3) What improvements are needed in the district?

The board members will want to focus on specific areas in the school operation to better understand the district. This understanding will be an asset in the planning and implementation of the entire process. It is important to remember the selection process is more than simply advertising a vacancy and hiring the best candidate. Each candidate is evaluating and comparing the potential of each vacancy available to decide which superintendency is best suited for him/her. The effective board knows what it is looking for, what it has to offer and how to best promote and attract candidates. The specific areas of interest for both the board and candidates will be:

Identify needs

- Student achievement levels
- Curriculum offerings
- Administrative leadership style
- Building needs
- Size and quality of teaching and support staff
- Community attitude and characteristics
- Educational goals of the district
- Board policies, administrative rules and master contract
- Budget needs
- Employee relations

The qualifications of the new superintendent should directly relate to goals and needs of the school system. See the section titled "Qualifications," page 21 for further details.

Remember, the task before the board is to select a new superintendent. The in-depth review and analysis of the district may identify a number of items which may need some attention. For example, most districts have a job description for the superintendent. If the job description is no longer accurate or does not exist, the board may have time to draw up a current

one. However, if the board determines that the board policies are outdated, the board will obviously not have time to revise the entire policy manual. Do not get distracted by a number of issues which may surface as a result of the selection process. The important point is to consider the various issues and recognize a need to have something done about it in the future. The candidate may ask questions during the interview which may touch on one or more of the areas that need future attention. It is best for the board to be truthful and acknowledge a need for future work and concentration in these areas that are in need of attention.

The area of self-study of the district is an appropriate time for community involvement, superintendent exit interviews, community surveys, and use of a consultant.

Imagine the ideal

A. Board/Superintendent Relations — The board should attempt to define the ideal relationship between itself and the future superintendent. This statement can serve two critical functions. First, it will aid the board members in focusing on a specific leadership style or traits possessed by each candidate during the screening and/or interview process. Second, it will serve as a point of reference for both parties in future work relations. The board has, in effect, stated how it perceives the relationship, and the candidate has an opportunity to clarify, interpret and accept or reject the statement. The statement should define for the candidate the board members' expectations.

An example of Board/Superintendent Relation statement is as follows:

> *The Board believes that the legislation of policies is the most important function of a school Board and that the execution of the policies is the function of the superintendent.*
>
> *Delegation by the Board of its executive powers to the superintendent provides freedom for the superintendent to manage the schools within the Board's policies and frees the Board to devote its time to policy making and appraisal functions.*
>
> *The Board holds the superintendent responsible for the administration of its policies, the execution of Board decisions, the operation of the internal systems designed to serve the school program, and for informing the Board about school operations and problems.*

B. Job Description — The first place to start in determining job qualifications is to review the current job description for the superintendent. The job description is a blueprint or guide for work to be accomplished. It is intended to meet the needs of both the superintendent, who is to do the work, and the board, which evaluates the progress of the work.

Most districts have a job description for the superintendent. The job description should be reviewed for both accuracy and comprehensiveness. If the job description is no longer accurate or does not exist, the board may consider 1) drafting a new one or 2) acknowledging the need to draft one within the first three months of the new superintendent's appointment. A sample job description can be found in Appendix A.

C. Evaluation — The board should plan to develop a written superintendent evaluation process to be implemented at least once during the first year. The new superintendent will probably encourage the use of a meaningful evaluation process. The board may have developed an evaluation instrument for the previous superintendent. The evaluation instrument should be carefully reviewed to determine if it is still appropriate for the new superintendent. The instrument may also focus some attention on the superintendent's perceived strengths and weaknesses that were identified during the selection process. The evaluation process can be an extension of the selection process. All evaluations should be in writing with a copy presented to the superintendent and one copy placed in the superintendent's personnel file for future reference.

Qualifications

Qualifications for a superintendency can be divided into three major components. The first category is the minimum certification requirements. The second category includes all the qualities the board determines to be desirable, job-related qualifications. The third is a group of characteristics or items which are specifically excluded from consideration by state or federal law because of discrimination. It is very important to have the board come to a consensus on the qualifications needed for the new superintendent. The board must agree on what to look for before it can begin to look.

Minimum requirements

A. Certification Requirements — Every superintendent in Iowa must meet the minimum qualifications to obtain certification from the Iowa Department of Education (DE). Each superintendent is required to hold a current administrative certification with a superintendent's endorsement which may be obtained from the DE by furnishing proof of each of the following:

1. four (4) years of successful teaching experience,
2. a Master's degree in school administration from an accredited institution,
3. Completion of thirty (30) semester hours of approved graduate study completed after receipt of the Master's degree,
4. general school administrative experience under supervision of the institution or equivalent experiences.

All certificates issued after October 1, 1988, will require the candidate to have three years of K-12 or Area Education Agency administrative experience in addition to the teaching experience.

Each candidate for a superintendency should be required to provide proof of holding a current, valid, administration certificate and superintendent's endorsement to allow employment in Iowa, or be able to show reasonable expectation to be the holder of the necessary endorsement prior to hiring. Most boards of directors will require candidates to possess a superintendent's endorsement at the time of application for job consideration. Any candidate who holds the proper endorsement may legally serve as a superintendent. The board should remember that certification does not guarantee performance. Certification should be considered the minimum, entry-level qualification for an applicant aspiring to become a superintendent.

District needs

B. Job-Related Qualifications — The board is encouraged to develop a list of the skills, abilities and characteristics of the ideal superintendent for the school district. This list is intended to go beyond the minimum required qualifications and help to identify the characteristics or criteria which will be used as the basis for recruiting and selecting the next superintendent. The criteria should reflect the current needs as well as short- and long-range goals of the district. Several techniques and options for providing involvement of the community and public can be found in prior sections of this publication.

Ad hoc committees, surveys, consultants and public hearings may all be valuable sources for information which the board will use to determine which criteria will be included in the final list used for recruiting, screening, interviewing and selection of the superintendent. The selected criteria should reflect the district's goals, staff needs, community needs, financial condition of the district and the educational and approval standards of state.

The board should keep in mind the following observations:

- The superintendency is a generalist position,
- The superintendency is expected to be a leadership position for the total system,

- The style of leadership used by the new superintendent will have an impact on district operations,
- The strengths of the administrative central office staff should be considered when determining the criteria for the superintendent,
- The criteria should be realistically based on the salary and fringe benefit package.

The list of desirable criteria that may be developed by a board is potentially very large. The most commonly used qualities include: creativity, professional stature, good interpersonal skills, ability to lead, ability to manage, ability to communicate, ability to make decisions, high academic standards, ability to work with the board, ability to supervise and develop staff and ability to manage financial and physical resources.

What board presidents look for

A list of 24 items was used to evaluate board presidents' perceptions of superintendent job competencies and characteristics which include *(See* **Schmitz** *21 in the bibliography)*:

The ability to communicate ideas to the board, staff and community.

The ability to work cooperatively with the board of education.

Experience in and knowledge of sound fiscal management procedures.

The ability to develop and direct an effective management team.

The ability to provide educational leadership.

The ability to develop both short and long-range district goals.

A thorough knowledge of and successful experience in sound management practices.

The ability to delegate authority yet maintain accountability.

The ability to select, assign and evaluate staff.

Successful experience in selection and implementation of education priorities.

Knowledge of negotiations and the collective bargaining process.

Progressive yet realistic educational philosophy.

The ability to work in the area of human relations.

The ability to interpret, review and revise school policy.

A strong academic background with successful experience in curriculum and its development.

Familiarity with school law.

Skilled leadership in the development of in-service training for administrators and teaching staff.

Knowledge of the legislative process.

An interest in the continuation of professional growth.

Successful experience as a classroom teacher.

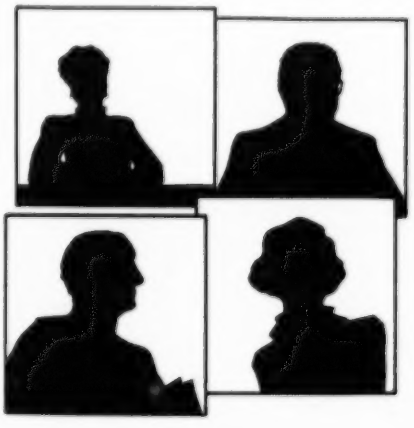
Willing to live in the district.

The ability to secure and maintain desired student behavioral patterns.

A community-oriented person who has high interest in a broad range of community groups and organizations.

Successful administrative experience in a comparable district.

The superintendent selected must have the Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree.



Each board will need to decide which criteria are most important to it and the district. These criteria will be used in the brochure to recruit candidates and in the selection phase of the screening and interviewing. The board needs to be realistic in its selection of the ideal criteria. Remember, even the best candidate may not possess all of the criteria listed by the board.

Non-discriminatory criteria

C. Discriminatory Qualification — The criteria determined by the board must not conflict with state or federal non-discrimination laws. Interpretations of the law find it an unfair or discriminatory practice to refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate in employment against any applicant because of age, sex, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status or disability unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification. The Federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act protects ages 40 to 70. It should be noted, the Iowa Civil Rights Act protects all applicants from the age of 18 years old or older.

Further information on the topic of non-discrimination can be found in the "Interview" section of this document, page 31.

Internal Promotion

After the board has developed a list of criteria for a new superintendent, it may wish to carefully consider the local administrative staff for the possibility of making a promotion to fill the vacancy. The internal promotion may take place following an extensive search process or under certain conditions, prior to opening the process up to applications.

When to promote

The board may consider promotion of a qualified administrator from within the district under the following conditions:

1. The administrator meets the selection criteria,
2. The promotion is not in violation of a board policy on affirmative action or state or federal guidelines.

The promotion of an internal candidate is sometimes perceived as an attempt to maintain the status quo of the district. This is obviously a judgment call the board must make. In considering an internal promotion, the board must weigh the advantages of rewarding superior service of current staff, enthusiasm and staff morale against the disadvantages of perceived provincialism or maintaining the status quo.

The board needs to carefully approach the decision on whether to promote directly or to conduct an open search. Most boards open the selection process even when a strong candidate is currently on the administrative staff. However, the board should not conduct a charade by encouraging candidates to apply when it plans to hire an internal candidate.

Recruiting Candidates

A. Open Search — Most boards conduct an open search requesting applications from all qualified candidates. An open search adds credibility and objectivity to the selection process. If one or more administrators from within the system are interested in the position, their applications should be treated the same as all other applicants. If the board has outstanding candidate(s) on its staff, it may choose automatically to place those individuals into the pool of candidates who will be interviewed.

Once the open search process is begun (i.e. public announcement of vacancy and a request for applications) do not attempt to stop in the middle. The board should proceed through each of the steps as planned to prevent possible legal problems.

Estimate costs

B. Budget — Recruiting and selecting a new superintendent is acknowledged to be the most important task that a board may be called to do. It is important for the board to establish a budget to allow it to obtain the goals of the project. The selection process is not the place to begin a cost savings program.

Typical budget expenditures include:

- Committee expenses
- Brochure
- Applicant forms
- Advertising
- Postage and stationery
- Telephone
- Consultant (optional)
- Travel/lodging for candidate interview
- Travel/lodging for board's community visit
- Clerical
- Legal

If a consultant is retained, the consultant can assist the board in developing a budget and determining the types of additional expenses the board may incur over the consultant's fee.

The board should offer to pay the travel expenses and necessary lodging for each candidate who travels to the district for an interview. Travel expenses should also be paid to board members who conduct the visits to the community of the top candidates. All expenditures should be considered when the board is determining its strategy on where it announces the vacancy. A nationwide search, one which involves advertising in magazines and newspapers with widespread readership, will probably be more costly than a state or regional search. Once the announcement is public, the board may not restrict applications to specific geographical areas. A candidate cannot be excluded from the process based on current residency, no matter how the candidate found out about the vacancy. Any announcement has the potential to be national in scope.

The brochure

C. Brochure — The brochure is a very important document. It is the resumé of the school district. It is a comprehensive statement made by the board to potential candidates that emphasizes the positive aspects of the district, outlines the job, its benefits, and the selection process. The brochure is a promotional document designed to provide candidates with meaningful information on the benefits and requirements of the position to allow him/her to decide whether the position is suitable. It is also a legal document insofar as it sets non-discriminatory job-related criteria, specifies the screening and interview process, and notifies prospective candidates of open meetings and records law requirements.

The board should consider what successful candidates value in actively seeking and accepting a superintendency. In a recent survey, superintendents ranked the following ten areas as the most important factors in

their selection of the district:

1. General school atmosphere
2. Personal and political compatibility with the board
3. Salary and benefits
4. Staff training and support
5. Student achievement
6. Geographic region
7. District size
8. Office and school facilities
9. Climate and recreational facilities
10. Prestige and visibility of the position

Brochures vary in design, content, and emphasis. Most brochures will include the following:

- Announcement of the vacancy possibly including the reason for the vacancy,
- Description of the district educational programs, staff and students,
- Description of the community,
- Job description,
- Qualifications,
- Desired criteria,
- Description of application procedures including timelines for completion of critical tasks: deadline for application, screening, interviews, final decision, beginning date,
- Salary and fringe benefits

A copy of the brochure and a cover letter announcing the vacancy should be sent to each placement office of colleges and universities offering course work in educational administration located in a given geographic area or nationally. Copies should also be forwarded to state and national associations representing superintendents and school boards.

The brochure should be mailed to all individuals who make an application. This mailing should include a letter acknowledging receipt of the letter of application and outlining other responsibilities for the applicant. The mailing could include an application form if one has been developed.

D. Salary — The salary may not be the most important factor in the process, but it is one of the top three factors. The salary should be considered at the time the board is establishing the qualifications of the job. Will the salary be high enough to attract candidates who possess the desired qualifications? Consideration should be given to the salaries and fringe benefits of superintendents in similar positions. The maximum dollar figure available for salary should be determined by the board early in the planning process.

The brochure should contain a statement that will provide potential candidates a general idea as to what salary can be expected. This will allow the candidate to decide, along with all the other information available, whether to pursue the position. The phrase "salary negotiable" should be avoided. The phrase may produce applicants the district cannot afford or discourage potential candidates from applying — assuming the district will not pay enough. The brochure should list the maximum, a range, a minimum or relative amount i.e. "mid-40's.

Caution. Avoid negotiating a higher maximum salary at the end of the selection process than the amount originally set by the board to retain the board's final choice of candidates. The pool of applicants was created, in part, based on the anticipated maximum salary. Had the board established a higher maximum salary in the beginning, it might have attracted a larger pool of applicants or applicants with greater qualifications.

As a rule, a board does not save money by hiring a new superintendent. This is true even in situations where a long term superintendent retires. Typically the salary is about the same for the incumbent and new superintendent. The board's primary objective should be to hire the best superintendent possible, not to hire the least expensive candidate.

E. Application Form — The use of an application form can be an important and essential component of the selection process for two primary reasons. First, the form will provide the board with a single, uniform format for all candidates to use in providing information. Without the use

of an application form, the resumé or vita designed by the applicant and the college placement office credentials will be the primary sources of information. Each resumé will provide information in a style that the applicant perceives will best present his/her qualifications. The screening process will require a systematic evaluation of the 50 to 100 different resumés. A standard application form will provide a uniform format which the screener(s) can use to locate information. Typical information found in application forms include name, address, telephone number, education institutions, degrees, employment history, references and possession of Iowa Superintendent's endorsement.

Certain questions should not be included on the application form. Questions dealing with sex, marital status, race or dependents are determined to be non-job related by state and federal guidelines. Further discussion on this topic is available in the Chapter on "The Interview," Section E "Pre-Employment Discrimination Inquiries."

The application forms often contain a number of specific questions or requests for written, job-related information the board indentified as important to the selection process. The candidate's responses to the questions contained on the application form may be important factors in the screening process. Beware, however — creative writers will excel in this area.

Candidates should be notified that applicant's name, address, employment, training, experience and education is open to public inspection upon request under Iowa's open records law.

Applicants may dislike long and involved application forms since much of the information requested may be repetitious of data available in the resumé and placement credentials. This should be considered when designing the application form.

Publicizing the opening

F. Announcement of Vacancy — The announcement of the vacancy may be mailed to college and university placement offices, newspapers, superintendent associations and selected journals. Do not rely solely on a single source. The announcement should be designed to encourage the application of as many qualified candidates as possible.

The announcement should include basic information on the vacancy, procedures to follow for application and a deadline for closing of application period. All application materials should be mailed to the Project Coordinator (board secretary). Announcements forwarded to placement offices should include copies of the brochure and application form.

Timing of the announcement can have an impact on the number and quality of the applications. Most boards having a choice as to when the announcement is made for positions to be filled July 1, choose to advertise in late December to February. Boards making earlier announcements typically provide for a longer time period in which to apply. It is possible to have the announcement made so early in the school year that it is overlooked by superintendents currently employed. A superintendent may be hesitant to complete the selection process too early, consequently being viewed as a "lame duck" in the current position.

Districts faced with filling a vacancy beginning in August or at the end of the first semester for example will probably receive fewer applicants than those occurring at year end. The board should carefully consider the practicality of attempting to hire a replacement superintendent to begin mid-year. It might be advantageous to appoint an acting superintendent for the interim period and to undertake a comprehensive selection process designed with the new superintendent starting at the beginning of the next school year.

If the board decides to shorten the selection process in an attempt to hire "as soon as possible," the period for receipt of applications may be shortened to one month. However, this will rush the process. A one-month time period will not give the university placement office enough time to effectively contact registered individuals.

The local news media can provide important assistance during the selection process. Beginning with the board's consideration and determination on how to solicit public input, the media can be a valuable disseminator of information. Board meetings, agendas and committee

meetings all provide a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas for interested citizens. It is wise to meet with the news media to establish lines of communication, and for the project coordinator to provide assurance that they will be kept informed throughout the selection process. An adversarial relationship with the media may lead to possible embarrassment of the candidate, boards, communities and the media. A cooperative, open approach can go far to avoid this.

Some items contained on the application form are open to public inspection according to Iowa law. Items dealing with the name and address of applicant, name of current employer, work experience, education and degrees and institutions attended are public information. Most reporters are not interested in printing the names of all applicants but rather are interested in specific information regarding the final group of candidates considered for interviews. However, be prepared to release all names if requested. The placement credentials which contain confidential references must not be made public or be open to review by other than board members or employed designee(s).

Screening Process

The purpose of the screening step of the process is to evaluate objectively the qualifications of each candidate based on the application material when compared to the criteria established by the board. The top six to ten candidates who best "fit" the predetermined criteria will receive further consideration for the position.

Create a check list

Before the screening begins, a standard recording form or check list must be designed. This form will be used to record the observations of the screener(s) about each candidate. The form should contain or parallel the criteria developed in the earlier stage of the process by the board. The form should have space for notes, a section to identify the individual's perceived strengths and weaknesses and space for overall rating. Candidate responses to questions on an application form are very helpful in evaluating the qualifications of specific areas of importance to the board.

The single most critical item in the screening phase is the use of a standard form or check list to provide an objective, uniform system to evaluate each candidate's application.

Who screens? The screening process is related to the size of the district. In superintendent selections in smaller districts, the board members commonly do the screening. Larger districts tend to use consultants who in turn screen the candidates. Least used and least recommended is an ad hoc screening committee.

A. Board — If the board decides to screen the applicants, it may choose to use the following process:

1. The project coordinator (board secretary) places application materials in large manila envelopes - ten candidate applications per envelope.
2. A cover sheet, listing individual board members names is attached to the envelope.
3. Each board member is given one envelope containing the applications.
4. Each board member reviews, evaluates, and records observations for each applicant on an individual check list.
5. The board member retains his/her own check list on each candidate.
6. The board member places the application materials back in the envelope, checks off his/her name and forwards the packet to the next board member on the list.
7. This process is continued until all applications have been reviewed by each board member.
8. A meeting is called at the completion of packet routing cycle to discuss the individual candidates and select the top six to ten candidates.

Confidentiality is key

The process described above contains two important features. The first is the fact that each board member reviews the application materials separate and apart from the influence of other board members. Second, the board members can review the applications at their own convenience away from a formal meeting setting. *This entire process is based on the absolute conviction that the application materials are to be viewed as confidential documents.* Board members must carefully protect the materials and not allow them to lay around in open view of family or friends. If confidentiality cannot be observed, then the applications should be retained at the administrator's office and each board member will be required to screen the materials at that location.

It is very important for each board member to make notes on the candidates check list relative to specific observations made during the review process. The notes will aid the recall powers of the board members during the board discussion on whom to select for the final group and why.

B. Consultant — One of the services most often performed by a consultant is the screening of applicants. All applicants will normally be received by the district project coordinator (board secretary) who would maintain a record keeping system. All applications are forwarded to the consultant who reviews and evaluates the candidate's qualifications against the board's criteria to determine the top candidates. The consultant then presents his/her recommendations to the board on the top six to ten candidates and returns all the applications materials to the project coordinator.

C. Ad Hoc Screening Committee — If the board decides to use a screening committee it should appoint no more than ten to 12 people, seven of whom should be citizens. Efforts should be made to balance the committee by sex and minorities within a community. The project coordinator or staff member skilled in working with groups and familiar with personnel selection should prepare the group members for the task. The preparation could include review of simulated packets of materials, a review of the district's criteria and screening check list. The committee should follow the same process as described in part "A" used in the board-conducted screening project.

The use of a screening committee, consisting of members of the public other than board members, should be included in the description of the process contained in the brochure. If not announced in advance, there may be a serious question regarding making confidential portions of the application form available to a citizens' group. It is possible that some candidates may be hesitant to apply for the position if a large number of community citizens and staff members will review the application materials.

At the completion of the committee's assignment, it will present a list of six to ten names for the board's consideration and review. The board should receive the list and review the recommended applications. The screening committee should not rank-order its recommendations to the board.

Helpful Hints to Screeners

- The lack of or weakness in meeting a single criterion should not automatically exclude a candidate (only exception — certification).
- Concentrate screening efforts on best candidates — it is not necessary to differentiate among the lowest 60 to 70 percent of candidates.
- List strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.
- Remember some candidates apply to many vacancy announcements, even some for which their experiential background would not justify realistic expectations.

Resumé — The resumé or vita is a summary statement of the individual's background which lists information such as education, work experiences, organization memberships, publications and articles written, professional activities, speeches, hobbies and interests. It is an attempt by the candidate to highlight his/her accomplishments in a manner designed to attract the attention of the board members/screeners in the screening process.

All resumés are expected to be concise, well organized and legible. Private firms are available to assist in the design and development of resumés. A good resumé is no guarantee of good communication skills.

However, a poor resumé is a good predictor of poor communication skills.

The references listed by the candidates should be carefully checked. This would include calling the individuals by telephone to verify the reference and gather further information. It is often desirable to seek the candidate's permission to contact other persons not listed on the candidate's resumé or in the placement credential.

Letters of Recommendation — Each letter should be read carefully. The board members should ask four questions regarding the content of each letter:

1. What would you expect a person in the position of the author of the letter to say about the candidate?
2. What specific areas of performance or personality did the author emphasize?
3. What was not stated that you expected to see?
4. Is there a consistency on the qualities identified among the letters of recommendation?

Typically you would expect to see letters of recommendation dated within the past one to three years from a board president, a college professor and another working acquaintance.

The next step would be to contact the top candidates directly to determine if each is still available and interested in the position. The board should attempt to have no fewer than six candidates at the end of the screening phase. If the pool is less than six, perhaps the board should reconsider a few of the next highest candidates. Once the board determines the first pool of finalists, the unsuccessful candidates should be promptly notified.

The Interview

The interview is one of the most critical phases of the selection process. It is the first time when the candidate and the entire board have an opportunity to meet. The two-hour period of time spent in the interview may have a long-term impact on the lives of the board members and the candidate as well as students, citizens and employees of the district.

One of the main objectives of the interview is to collect information about the candidates to predict how each will perform if selected to be the new superintendent. It is also very important to get a "feel" of the interpersonal relationships which may develop between the candidate and board. Careful planning by the board will improve the board's ability to gather meaningful information upon which to make a decision.

Pre-Interview Arrangements

The project coordinator, consultant or board president should personally extend an invitation to each of the candidates selected to be interviewed. The invitation should include an explanation of the process the board will follow and suggested date(s) for an interview. The board members should clear their personal calendars in advance in an attempt to group the interviews within a five to ten day time period. Allow each candidate two to three days but do not allow candidates to select the "first" and "last" positions in the interview schedule. The board should offer to pay all candidate expenses for travel to and from the interview. Summary information concerning the make-up of the current board, individual board member tenure and occupation may be provided to the candidates. The board may wish to send additional background materials about the district to the candidates as a resource to prepare for the interview. These materials could include copies of the items such as the current budget, the latest Secretary's Annual Report (SAR), master contract documents, district goals and student achievement reports.

The district representative should answer any questions posed by the candidates relative to the process. The candidate should be given the name and telephone number of the contact person in case any last minute changes occur to the scheduled interview. Remember, do not invite any candidate in for an interview if the candidate has not discussed the possibility of a contract release with the candidate's current board president.

Most boards will plan to conduct a single series of interviews followed by community visits and perhaps a follow-up interview/consultation session with the highest ranking candidate prior to the offering of a contract. An alternative to this system is to plan two separate series of interviews. The first series of up to one and one-half hours in length would be used to further screen the candidates to the top two to three for the purpose of inviting them back to the district for a more comprehensive interview schedule with the board, employees, community, members, and tours of the community and school.

The Pre-Interview Schedule

If a board plans to follow the first method of interviews (i.e. a single series) then the candidates' visits to the district should be used for more than just the interview. The visits should provide the board an opportunity to acquaint the candidates with the students, staff, facilities and community of the district. The visit may be scheduled for the entire day or a half-day depending on the decision of the board. The following section outlines a one-day visit. It can be easily modified for a half-day visit.

Invite the candidate to visit a specific school building of the candidate's choice in the morning shortly after the start of the school day. The project coordinator or board president should introduce the candidate to the building principal. The candidate may tour the building and meet with the building principal following the tour to ask any questions about the school. Lunch may be arranged at a restaurant or in the school cafeteria with the board president and other board members.

The candidate may visit the central office following lunch. This visit would include a tour of the central office with ample time for meeting central office staff and to review documents such as board minutes, policy manuals, negotiated contracts and curriculum materials. At the end of the office tour the candidate should have time to meet with the superintendent and ask any questions.

The next item on the schedule would be a tour of the community and/or district. The board should provide an opportunity for the candidate to meet with the administrative staff members, and selected teaching staff members for up to an hour during the day visit. Typically this visit will take place at the conclusion of the school day. The purpose of the meeting is to allow each of the groups and the candidate an occasion to become acquainted and to provide additional information to the board. The board may wish to follow the same general guidelines listed previously in this document under "Ad Hoc Committee" in "The Screening Process."

Following the staff visit, the candidate should be given time to rest and collect his/her thoughts for the evening interview. The district may consider providing a motel room for the use of the candidate.

If the candidate's spouse accompanies the candidate to the district, the board may wish to provide some activities for the spouse such as a tour of the community or visits with local real estate agencies.

The activities for the evening interview should start at 6:00 p.m. with a dinner for the candidate and available board members. If the majority of board members attend the lunch or dinner meeting, caution should be exercised to keep the topics strictly to social discussion. If the majority of board members plan to deliberate topics dealing with board business including the hiring process, then the lunch or dinner must comply with the open meetings law. If the candidate requests a closed session under Iowa Code § 21.5(1)(i), (1985) the session may be closed with a roll call vote.

The formal interview should begin at 7:00 p.m. and conclude between 9:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Interview Techniques

The board's interview technique can be described as a patterned or structured group interview. The interview is patterned or structured to the extent:

- The majority of the questions is predetermined by the board,
- The same basic set of job-related questions are asked each candidate in an objective manner,
- Each board member will ask a series of at least two to three questions,
- All interviews are conducted in the same location.

The interview is a group process because the individual board members participate in asking the questions. All board members should participate

in the process. The structured interview will also assist in keeping the process moving forward on a timely basis and prevent the candidate from rambling, digressing or otherwise controlling the pace. It is common practice for the board to place a limit of two to three minutes on each answer of the candidate.

The questions developed by the board should directly relate to the superintendent's qualifications and criteria created by the board earlier in the process. The questions should attempt to clarify each candidate's position on the issues presently facing the district. The candidate's leadership should be reviewed in light of the style desired by the board. The interview may also be used to fill in the gaps that may have been spotted in the application materials.

Interview Questions

The types of questions can be categorized into four groups: 1) closed, 2) informational, 3) situational, and 4) probing. The closed type of question can be answered in one word—typically a yes or no. In general this type of question should have limited use during the interview. The informational question provides the candidate an opportunity to express personal viewpoints based on his/her experiences and knowledge. An example would be, "What do you consider to be the most important duties of superintendents?" The third category of questions is situational in which the candidate is presented with a set of conditions, either real or hypothetical, and asked to respond to specific questions. The candidate may be asked to select his/her response from a list of two or three alternatives. For example, "Suppose the district received notification that state aid payments would be reduced by 25 percent for the next year. What action would you propose the district undertake?" The last type is a probing question which is intended to draw out greater depth in understanding of the response. A typical probing question is "why do you believe that is the correct response?" following the candidate's answer to a question. Each of the four types has a purpose and may be used during the interview.

Some examples of the types of questions a board might wish to ask a candidate are presented below:

1. **General Background**
   a. Why are you interested in this position?
   b. What areas of education especially appeal to you?

2. **Philosophy of School Administration and Operation**
   a. What do you consider to be the most important duties of a superintendent?
   b. Describe what you consider to be a desirable working relationship among the board, the superintendent, and other administrative officers.
   c. How would you keep the board informed on educational issues and problems?
   d. What would be your reaction if the board opposed something you thought was educationally sound?
   e. What are the responsibilities of the superintendent and the board in the hiring of personnel?
   f. What do you understand to be your responsibility towards providing educational leadership?
   g. To what extent do you believe responsibilities can and should be delegated to principals? How do you expect them to account for delegated responsibility?
   h. How do you expect to be evaluated?
   i. Describe how you prepare an agenda including background packet for a board meeting.
   j. Describe your understanding of the management team and how it could be implemented in this district.
   k. What is your attitude toward the negotiations/collective bargaining process. Describe your personal involvement in the process.

3. **Community Relationships**
   a. What should be the role of the superintendent in developing community support for quality education, financial support of new programs for instruction?
   b. What should be the responsibility of the board in developing community support for quality education? Explain what procedures you would use to keep the community informed about the program.
   c. The district has just received a report from an Iowa Department of Education visitation. Some of the district's programs were commended, others were identified as being in non-compliance with the state standards. How would you handle the report?
   d. How involved should a superintendent become in the civic affairs of the community?

4. **Instructional Improvement**
   a. What should the superintendent's role be for improvement of instruction?
   b. What are some of the major problems which prevent improvement in quality instructional programs?
   c. What criteria do you use to evaluate the instructional program?
   d. How would you design a project for determining the educational goals for the district? How would the goals be updated?
   e. As funding becomes tighter, we are concerned with getting the most of each dollar spent. If the student achievement scores begin to decline what steps would you take to reverse the process without spending additional funds?
   f. With the increased emphasis on technology in society, what ways do you see to apply technology to improve instruction?

5. **Professional Improvement**
   a. What considerations about teacher and staff welfare do you believe the most important to a good school system?
   b. Would you recommend release time for teachers and administrators to take part in professional meetings and in curriculum development projects? Why or why not?
   c. What is the role of the superintendent in stimulating the faculty toward professional growth and self-improvement?

6. **Relationships with Teachers, Youth and Minority Groups**
   a. How would you resolve conflicts that might exist with or among of teachers, youth and community groups?
   b. How important is it for you to have trusting relationships with teachers? How do you achieve this?

7. **Professional Contributions**
   a. What would you consider to be your most outstanding accomplishments as an administrator?
   b. How did you go about improving the educational program in a previous position? How well developed were the board policies in the schools in which you have worked?
   c. What do you consider your greatest strengths? What is your greatest weakness?
   d. How do you plan to improve your own competence in the future?

8. **Finance**
   a. Explain how you develop the annual school budget.
   b. In developing the budget what goals and objectives do you establish?
   c. If it were necessary to cut 25 percent out of the budget how would you propose doing it?

9. **Building and Transportation**
   a. If we experience a decline in enrollment or need to close a building, what are some of the guidelines you would recommend we follow? How would you proceed to develop a recommendation for a possible closure?
   b. We run a fleet of buses. If we were interested in possibly evaluating the efficiency of the program, how would you proceed?

10. **Miscellaneous**
    a. What do you believe are some of the major trends in education today?
    b. When will you be able to begin as superintendent if you are selected to this position?
    c. Will you be able to spend any time before then to plan an orderly transition?

The primary reasons for using a battery of the pre-determined questions are as follow:

- It is important for the board to select the issues and questions that will provide the most meaningful information during the interview.
- Each candidate will be given an opportunity to answer the same battery of questions and thereby assure a common basis for comparison.
- The board will have a uniform and objective basis for making a decision.
- The board can maintain the control and pace of the interview by knowing questioning strategy.
- The board can better avoid the possibility of asking unplanned questions which may be prohibited by state or federal laws relating to discrimination in employment.

Pre-Employment Discrimination Inquiries

Specifically, the item pertaining to employment discrimination set forth above refers to federal and state laws which prohibit the use of all pre-employment inquiries, qualifying factors, and criteria which may be used to disproportionately screen out members of minority groups or members of one sex and are not valid predictors of successful job performance.

The board should be aware that by inquiring into only one of the specifically protected areas, it is open for a potential charge of unlawful discrimination. Even if the board does not use the information, it may have an unlawful effect of discouraging the protected groups from continuation

in the process. If the board members ask a question that is discriminatory, the board has the burden of proving the answer was not considered in the selection process.

It should be noted that if the board is attempting to implement an affirmative action program by seeking a minority candidate, then such questions will be viewed in a different manner.

The following list provides questions by subject area that should not be used on the employment application forms or in the pre-employment interview for *any* job and related questions which may be asked:

Subject	Job-Related, Non-Discriminatory Questions	Not Job-Related Potentially Discriminatory Questions
Address/Residence	What is your mailing address? How long a resident of this state or city? (for tax purposes)	Where did you live previously?
Age/Birthdate	May only ask whether applicant is within the legal age range for your employment purpose. The protected age range is 40 to 70 under federal standards and 18 to 70 under Iowa standards.	How old are you? What is your date of birth?
Arrests/Convictions	Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, when, where, and nature of offense? Are there any felony charges pending against you?	Inquiries regarding arrests
Birthplace		Birthplace of applicant, his or her parents, spouse, or other close relative. Requirement that applicant submit birth certificate, and naturalization or baptismal records
Citizenship	Are you a citizen of the U.S.? (May be asked only to determine whether applicant has legal right to work in the U.S.) Do you have legal right to remain permanently in U.S.?	Of what country are you a citizen? Are you a naturalized or native-born citizen? Are your parents or spouse naturalized or native-born citizens of the U.S.? Requirement to submit naturalization or birth certificates
Dependents		Do you have any children? How old are your children? Do you have any dependents? What child care arrangements have you made?
Disabilities/Handicaps/Health/ Pregnancy	Do you have any impairments—physical, mental or medical— which would interfere with your ability to do the job for which you have applied? Are there any positions for which you should not be considered or job duties you cannot perform because of a physical or mental handicap? Inquiries into contagious or communicable diseases which may endanger others.	Are you pregnant? Are you using any contraceptives? Are you planning to have a family? Requirement that women be given a pelvic examination. Do you have a disability or handicap? Do you use any adaptive device or aid? Have you ever been treated for the following diseases ?
Driver's License	May be asked about only if driving is necessary for the job.	Do you have a valid driver's license?
Education	Inquiry into the academic, vocational, or professional education of the applicant and the schools attended.	
Emergency	Name and address of person to be notified in case of accident or emergency.	Name and address of nearest relative to be notified in case of emergency.
Experience	Inquiries into work experience.	
Height or Weight		Any inquiries regarding applicant's height or weight.
Housing	Do you own a home? Do you rent, or live in an apartment?	
Language	What language(s) do you speak or write fluently (only if job related)	What is your mother tongue? What language is commonly used at home?
Marital Status		Any inquiries into marital status, plans for a family, or number of dependents. Is your spouse employed and where? What is your spouse's name?

Military Service	Inquiry into applicant's military experience in the Armed Forces of the U.S., or in a state militia (branch, service dates, occupational specialty, reason for leaving). Inquiries into dates, conditions and type discharge unless it is the result of a military conviction.	Inquiry into applicant's general military experience not job related.
Name	Applicant's full name. Have you ever worked for this business or organization under a different name? Is any additional information relative to a different name necessary to check on your work record? If yes, explain.	Applicant's maiden name. Original name of applicant whose name has been changed by court order or otherwise.
National Origin	Inquiry into languages applicant speaks or writes but only if relevant to the job.	Inquiry into applicant's lineage, ancestry, descent, national origin, nationality, or parentage. Nationality of applicant's parents or spouse. What is your mother tongue?
Organizations	Inquiry into membership in professional organizations or hobby groups relevant to the job.	Inquiry into membership in specific organizations the name or character of which reveal personal information which could be used to discriminate against the applicant.
Photograph		Requirement that applicant submit a photograph either before or after the pre-employment inquiry.
Race or Color		Questions regarding the complexion or color of skin, national origin, ancestry, etc. (see also "National Origin").
References	Who suggested that you apply for a position here? Name and address of person(s) for reference.	Inquiries into the name of priest or religious leaders.
Relatives	Names of applicant's relatives already employed by the school system.	Requirement to furnish name and address of any relative.
Religion	General questions regarding work hours only, such as: Are you available to work the hours and days required for the job?	Inquiries into religious affiliation. Inquiries into religious holidays observed.
Sex		Any inquiry regarding applicant's sex including title of Mr., Miss, or Mrs. Any questions regarding family planning.
Special Skills	Inquiries into special skills such as foreign languages, writing, operating computers, etc.	

It should be noted that once an individual is hired, additional information may be obtained such as marital status, dependents, health information which is needed for insurance and income tax purposes.

The interviews should be held in a comfortable setting preferably away from telephones or other interruptions. The board members and candidates should be seated around a large table to allow occasional note taking and easy eye contact between the board member and the candidate.

At the beginning of the interview, the board president should quickly review the timelines and general guidelines to be followed during the interview for the benefit of each candidate and the board members. Introductions of the board members should follow. A name plate or a hand written name card should be placed in front of each board member. The candidate should be informed that a tape recorder will be recording the proceedings (assuming a closed session interview) and board members may be taking occasional notes.

Conducting the Interview

The president should begin with an easy request to start the questioning strategy. Avoid placing too much weight on first impressions of the candidate. The questions should be straightforward and objectively stated to prevent any prompting of the answer desired by the board. Board members should be free to follow with a clarifying or probing question if the response is unclear or incomplete.

The interview should be a two-way exchange between the board members and the candidate. The candidate should be allowed to clarify a question posed by a board member or to ask a question to gain information about the board and district. Usually the candidate's questions are encouraged during the last 15 minutes of the interview.

The process of determining, drafting and asking questions is very

important to the interview. The art of being an active listener is of equal importance. Each board member should pay close attention to the communication style demonstrated by the candidate. This includes not only listening to the answer to the questions but "reading" the body language signs such as eye contact, facial expression, gestures and body posture. The candidate should be given ample time to develop responses to the questions. The goal of the interviewers is to "talk little" and "listen much." Silence can prove to be very valuable during the interview. When used properly it will draw out additional information from the candidate . Board members should not interfere with attempting to redirect a question that was not answered completely when perhaps a period of silence would allow the candidate to continue.

Note taking by the board members should be held to minimum. The board member asking the question should pay close attention during the candidate's response. Board members could work as two-member teams. When one member asks the question, the other team member could take notes. The notes could be divided into two categories of "facts or information" and "hunches or hypotheses." The factual information can be easily noted. The second category is more subjective and requires the use of feelings, intuition and instinct. The board members should attempt to recognize patterns to the candidate's responses. Remember, if the interview is in a closed session, the entire proceeding will have been tape recorded as a requirement of Iowa's open meeting law. It is then possible to review the tape to clarify content.

Things to look for during the interview:

- Is the candidate dealing realistically with the questions?
- Is the candidate rewording the questions to fit his/her answers?
- How does the candidate sell him/her-self to you?
- Does the candidate have a sense of humor and humility?
- Is the candidate in agreement with the goals and objectives of the school district?
- Does the candidate have good questions to ask the board members?
- Is the candidate informed about the district?

Board members should be cautioned to maintain an open mind concerning all candidates. There is a danger of some board members making a mental commitment to one of the first candidates to be interviewed and to pay little attention to the remaining candidates. If the candidate either decides not to take the job or is not selected by the other board members, then the board member who paid little attention to the other candidates will not be able to provide a meaningful contribution to the selection process. Board members should not discuss or attempt to persuade other board members on the qualities of the individual candidates immediately following the interviews.

Each board member should independently complete the interview evaluation form and summarize the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. The evaluation form should identify the major areas stressed in the battery of questions during the interview. It should contain space for written comments. The evaluation forms will be the basis for discussion in the post-interview screening session.

The board may wish to meet following the first interview to discuss the format and process of the interview. Questions such as "did the interview go as planned? If not, what needs to be changed?" are appropriate. Do not discuss the merits of the candidate but restrict the comments to the interview structure.

Post-Interview Screening

Following the completion of all scheduled interviews, the board would meet to review and discuss the merits of each of the candidates. The objective is to select the top two or three candidates for further consideration (i.e. community visit and follow-up interviews). The basis of the discussion will be the evaluation forms each board member completed following the interview.

A good place to start is to discuss candidly each candidate without making comparisons to the other candidates. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. If other groups have been involved in a separate interview and have provided information, the information should

be added to the discussion by the board president. The focus of the discussion must center on "how will the candidate perform as superintendent in this district?"

The discussion should be a free give and take. Care should be taken to clarify any differences in perceptions held by individual board members as to what occurred during the interview. Ample time should be alloted to this phase of the selection process. A premature selection effort (i.e., a vote) may force board members into a position which may be difficult from which to retreat. The selection process works best when you start at the bottom and attempt to get consensus on the elimination of the weakest candidate. Then attempt to identify the next weakest candidate and move up to the top two or three candidates.

Community Visit

The community/district of the top two or three candidates should be visited by a committee of the board. A minimum of two to three board members should contact parents, teachers, board members, students, school employees, administrators, community leaders, the newspaper editor and the mayor in an attempt to assess the candidate's leadership style, behavior patterns, and dedication to education. The visit is an opportunity for the board members to assess professional accomplishments, enthusiasm and general attitude of the students, teachers, and colleagues toward the candidate. *The best predictor of the future is how well a person has performed in the past.* The committee should include both supporters of the candidate and at least one board member, if any exist, who may have reservations or is opposed to the candidate's appointment. At least one board member should serve on each community visitation committee to provide consistency to all visits.

References

The board should request the candidate to provide the names, addresses and telephone numbers for a list of positions (i.e. board members, teacher association president, etc.) determined by the board. The list should include a request to provide information about someone who has been critical of the candidate. The candidate may also be asked to provide a map of the district/community.

The committee should schedule appointments to meet with specific people during the community visit. The committee may decide to divide and meet individually with community members to contact a larger number of people. There should be some unstructured time available to talk to people in the local coffee shop and on main street. The committee members should use discretion in approaching the citizens and staff members of the candidate's district. It is best to indicate who you are and that the candidate is "one of several excellent candidates" under consideration. Nothing should be done to embarrass the candidate.

The committee members need to move past any criticism that may surface and probe the critic to determine why he/she is critical of the superintendent. The underlying reason(s) may reflect a desirable characteristic identified by the prospective board. The committee members should carefully analyze a situation in which a candidate is leaving a position under pressure. Pay close attention to any criticism of qualities the board holds highly. The committee and eventually the entire board needs to assess the individual candidate based on the criteria adopted early in the selection process.

Following the visit, each committee member will complete the survey form. After the last visit, the committee members will report back to the entire board. The committee's observations and evaluations should be part of the total data pool and not be accompanied by a specific recommendation. The entire board needs to weigh all the evidence available.

The Selection Process

A. Choose the Best — The board should meet following the community visits to evaluate the qualifications of the top candidates and to rank-order the candidates. This meeting may be a closed session at the board's motion according to Iowa Code § 21.5(1)(i), (1985) upon the candidate's request. The board should discuss each candidate's qualifications until a consensus is reached. If more than one candidate is acceptable, they should be placed in a rank-order (i.e. first choice, second choice, third choice, etc.). The candidates are placed in rank-order to provide direction to the board president in case the first choice declines the job offer. The president may immediately contact the next highest candidate without waiting to call another board meeting.

Agree on a system for choosing

Before the board begins its deliberation to select the top candidate, it needs to determine how it will break a deadlock or tie between the top candidates. Hopefully the board members will be able to agree on a top choice through the process of consensus. If it is not possible to agree on which of the top candidates is the best, the board may choose to use the total score of each board member's screening application check list or to use the interview check list score or the combination of the scores. The point totals of the various check lists are important tools to place candidates into general categories. However, the final decision as to whom to select to receive a job offer will include both objective evidence and subjective "feelings" on the part of the board.

If the board is having difficulty in reaching consensus, perhaps a series of short meetings would be more beneficial than one long marathon session. The shortened meetings will allow time for board members to reflect on the discussions.

The board may choose to conduct a follow-up interview if uncertainty exists at the ranking stage.

B. Follow-Up Interview — The reasons for conducting a follow-up interview include:

1. first impressions are fuzzy after community visit,
2. more than one outstanding candidate still remains,
3. board wants to be absolutely certain of its choice,
4. it provides an opportunity to resolve unanswered concerns of the candidate and the board, and,
5. details of the contract may be discussed.

The interview also provides an opportunity to invite the candidate and spouse (if any) to attend a dinner with the board members and their spouses prior to evening interview. The dinner will allow the board members and candidate an occasion to observe one another in an informal social setting.

Clarify unanswered questions

The interview would clarify any unanswered questions remaining from the first interview and/or community visit on the part of either the candidate or board. The questions would be more in-depth and probing based on the information gathered throughout the process. The interview will not be as structured as the first interview because the unanswered issues should be much narrower in scope.

The board members should be conscious of the personal chemistry between themselves and the candidate; the feeling or belief that the candidate is "right" for the district. Do not overlook the importance of intuition. All of the evaluation forms and numbers can bring you to the final point of decision making. At this point there must also be a "feeling" that the candidate is the right one to hire.

The salary, benefit packet and terms of the contract may be discussed. The board may have pre-determined its parameters so that a job offer can be made following the interview if the board is ready to do so.

Iowa Public Records Law/Open Meetings Law

Iowa's public records law requires that the name of the applicant, address, employment, training, experience and education be considered public record, open to public inspection.

The sample application form found in Appendix C contains asterisks (*) following each of the items identified to be public information. All other items pertaining to the application form such as lists of references, letters of recommendation, transcripts, written answers to specific questions and the individual board member's check list and notes for each candidate are confidential records. The records remain the legal custody of the district even if an out-of-state consultant temporarily has possession.

The Iowa open meetings law needs to be considered during a number of specific stages in the selection process. Although some of the considerations have been addressed in this handbook under the appropriate subject titles, all of the major issues are addressed in this section.

Reviewing Applications

When the board plans to review the confidential documents including the application materials and check lists completed by each board member at the conclusion of the screening step, it may do so in a closed session. Under the *screening* step, the review of confidential documents listed above may be done in a closed session of the board according to Iowa Code § 21.5(1)(i), (1985) upon request of the candidate and a motion of the board. The session will need to be tape recorded.

Candidate Meetings with Board

When the majority of board members gather for any function other than social or ministerial, and it is deliberating on an issue over which the board has authority, it must follow the open meeting requirements. These include announcement by posting the agenda and contacting interested parties who have a written request for such a notification. If the majority of board members are to meet with the candidate for lunch or dinner and plans include an informal discussion/interview, then the meeting should be announced as a work session and properly posted. This same advice would apply if the entire board including spouses meet over dinner with the candidate and spouse (if any) prior to the final interview. If the candidate requests the session to be closed according to Iowa Code § 21.5(1)(i), (1985) the board may, following a roll call vote, close the session. If the luncheon or dinner meeting could be determined to be strictly "social," then the open meetings law may not apply.

Interview

Candidate interviews may be held in closed session according to Iowa Code § 21.5(1)(i), (1985) if the candidate specifically requests the session to be closed and it is to prevent needless and irreparable injury. The candidate may choose not to request a closed session in which case the interview would be conducted in a board meeting open to the public.

Most interviews are conducted in a closed session following the request of the candidate. The closed session must be tape recorded and detailed minutes must be made according to the statute. Remember, the way to move into a closed session is to start the meeting in a properly posted public meeting and move upon roll call vote to a closed meeting. The board determines who besides its members and the candidate will be allowed to attend the closed session. Generally, the only other individual involved might be the board secretary whose task would be to run the tape recorder and take minutes. These tasks could be assigned to a board member if the board chooses not to have the secretary in the session.

Deliberations

The deliberation of the board following the completion of the interviews may also be closed according to Iowa Code § 21.5(1)(i), (1985) to discuss candidates if each candidate has made a request to board for a closed session. Assuming all candidates have made the request for closed session, the board may discuss the merits of each candidate, attempt to reach a

consensus on the top candidate and direct the board president to contact legal counsel and the top candidate to negotiate a tentative contract. The board may not legally cast a vote in the closed session but must rely on developing consensus through discussion.

If one or more of the candidates do not request a closed session for the deliberation, the board will need to discuss each candidate's merits in an open session. If the board is to make comparisons with candidates who were interviewed in a closed session, then the closed session candidates may be identified by a code such as candidates "A", "B" and "C" to protect their confidentiality.

Hiring the Superintendent

The final action to hire the superintendent rests with the board. The action must take place in an open meeting with a proper motion and vote of the board. The official board action will take place only after the candidate has accepted the tentative offer of the president. The board will be presented a tentative contract for its approval which incorporates specific details negotiated with the candidate and board president and/or legal counsel.

C. Negotiating a Contract — The board president, consultant or legal counsel should contact the top choice of the board and offer the position. Some districts choose to meet and negotiate a contract including salary and benefit package. A list of potential topics would include:

contract length after one year
starting date
contract review
personal leave
consulting arrangements
medical insurance
vision insurance
tax sheltered annuity
travel allowance
moving costs
vacation days
sick leave
professional leave
severance provisions
dental insurance
life insurance
paid professional dues
housing
transition per diem and expenses

The top candidate should be requested to provide the results of a recent physical examination or agree to take a physical examination. This should be done prior to the board's final action to approve a contract. Preferably, the possibility of this request should be included with the initial application materials.

Contact IASB for information pertaining to salaries, benefits, and other contract terms and conditions. Law requires that all initial superintendent contracts not exceed a one year period. After seven months of employment the board may offer an extended contract not to exceed three years.

The offer will be extended typically for a ten day period. If the offer is accepted the board will meet in an open meeting and vote to place the contract in force. The public vote to ratify the contract offer should not take place until the candidate has signed and returned the contract offer. The board should strive for consensus and hire the new superintendent on a 5-0 or a 7-0 vote. If the board cannot reach consensus, it should keep searching until it can attain consensus. If the offer is declined, the president should immediately contact the second choice.

D. Board Action — The vote of the board is a public record taken at an open meeting. The vote, announcement and introduction of the new superintendent to the community should be coordinated internally and with the successful candidate's previous district. The school administration and staff members should be informed of the selection prior to the general announcement. The district may schedule an open house to introduce the new superintendent to the community. Board members may make the introduction to service clubs. Community coffees may be held within the district.

All unsuccessful candidates from the final group should be informed of the board's selection as soon as possible. The placement offices and agencies that were originally requested to post the vacancy should also be informed that the vacancy is filled.

The Beginning of the New Superintendency

The board's task is not completed with the announcement of the new superintendent. A key ingredient in establishing a successful working relationship is to plan a written evaluation system of the superintendent. The evaluation system should emphasize the district's criteria upon which the superintendent reached high ratings as well as some criteria that may have been low. The evaluation process should not be viewed as a threat, but rather as a means to identify on-the-job performance and provide support to improve that performance.

The board should direct the personnel office or board secretary to create a personnel folder for the purpose of filing the individual's application materials and further confidential documents. All job application materials including check lists for each candidate and tape recording of interviews should be retained for a two-year period.

The long hours of planning, preparation and evaluation will begin to be repaid to the board members and the school district when the newly-selected superintendent and board start to develop a long-term working relationship. The impact of the right person on a school can be a tremendously positive experience for the entire educational system. The selection process will provide an opportunity for the board members to exercise a unique leadership role and chart a course for the future of the district. The board members will develop a greater appreciation and understanding for the role of a school board by experiencing this process. Hopefully, the experiences and knowledge gained by the board will provide a strong foundation on which to build a dynamic management team to face today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

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SUPERINTENDENT JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Superintendent of Schools

QUALIFICATIONS:
1. [Certificate, license, or other legal credential required.]
2. [Degree(s) required and area of major study.]
3. [Kind and amount of prior job experience required.]
4. Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the board may find appropriate and acceptable.

REPORTS TO: Board of Education

SUPERVISES: Directly or indirectly, all employees of the district

JOB GOAL: To provide leadership in developing and maintaining the best possible educational programs and services.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Interprets for the staff and implements all Board policies and all state law relevant to education.
2. Supervises, either directly or through delegation, all activities of the school system according to the policies of the board.
3. Represents the Board as liaison between the school district and the community.
4. Establishes and maintains a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities and needs of the school district, effecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the schools and the community.
5. Attends and participates in all regular and special meetings of the Board, except when own employment or salary is under consideration, and makes recommendations of any nature affecting the schools.
6. Reports to the Board such matters as deemed material to the understanding and proper management of the schools, or as the Board may request.
7. Assumes responsibility for the overall financial planning of the district and for the preparation of the annual budget, and submits it to the board for review and approval.
8. Establishes and maintains efficient procedures and effective controls for all expenditures of school funds in accordance with the adopted budget, subject to direction and approval of the Board.
9. Files, or causes to be filed, all reports required by the state and the school code.
10. Makes recommendations to the Board for the selection of personnel for the district.
11. Makes and records assignments and transfers of all employees in keeping with their qualifications.
12. Employs such personnel as may be necessary, within the limits of budgetary provisions and subject to the Board's approval.
13. Recommends to the Board for final action the promotion, salary changes, demotion, or dismissal of any employee.
14. Prescribes rules for the classification and advancement of students, and for the transfer of students from one building to another in accordance with published policies.
15. Summons employees of the district to attend such regular and occasional meetings as are necessary to carry out the educational program of the district.
16. Supervises methods of teaching, supervision, and administration in effect in the schools.
17. Attends such conventions and conferences as are necessary to keep abreast of latest educational trends.
18. Accepts responsibility for the general efficiency of the school system, for the development of the school staff, and for educational growth and welfare of the students.
19. Defines educational needs and formulates policies and plans for recommendation to the Board.
20. Makes all administrative decisions within the school necessary to the proper function of the school district.
21. Is responsible for scheduling the use of buildings and grounds by all groups and/or organizations.
22. Acts as purchasing agent for the Board, and establishes procedures for the purchase of books, materials and supplies.
23. Approves vacation schedules for all salaried district employees.
24. Conducts periodical district administration meetings.
25. Performs such other tasks as may from time to time be assigned by the Board.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT: Twelve months a year. Salary to be established by the Board.

EVALUATION: Performance of this job will be evaluated in accordance with provisions of the Board's policy on Evaluation of the Superintendent.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Reviewed and agreed to by: _____ Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of application for Superintendent of the _____ _____ Public School District. We want to express our appreciation for your consideration of the _____ system.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Superintendent's Announcement Brochure along with an official application form. Please complete the application form and return it at your earliest convenience, but no later than _____ . All applicants are responsible for having copies of requested materials including a complete application form on file by the deadline. Incomplete application files will be eliminated from consideration prior to the initial screening.

Thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely,

APPLICATION FOR SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

_____

_____

_____

- Applicants are requested to complete this form.
- Applicants are requested to submit a copy of their credentials, transcripts and resumé.
- All materials should be mailed to: _____

_____

_____

- Information on this application pertaining to the name, address, employment, training, experience and education legally is a public record, open to public inspection. These items are marked with an asterisk (*).

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION*

Name: _____ Office Phone (____) _____

Address: _____ Home Phone (____) _____

City: _____ State: __ ZIP Code: _____

2. EDUCATION*

List names of colleges or universities attended and the degrees received in order, beginning with the most recent.

Institution	*Attended from*	*to*	*Degree & Date*	*Major*	*Minor*

3. ADMINISTRATIVE & TEACHING EXPERIENCE*

List information beginning with current position

POSITION	*DISTRICT NAME*	*LOCATION CITY*	*STATE*	*NUMBER OF YEARS*	*FROM-TO:*	*ENROLLMENT*
					____ *to* __	
					____ *to* __	
					____ *to* __	
					____ *to* __	

4. OTHER PERTINENT EXPERIENCES*

TITLE	*EMPLOYER*	*LOCATION CITY*	*STATE*	*NUMBER OF YEARS*	*FROM-TO:*
					____ *to* __
					____ *to* __
					____ *to* __

5. PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND OFFICES HELD:

_____

_____

_____

6. **HONORS, AWARDS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PUBLICATIONS, MAJOR ADDRESSES**

7. **REFERENCES**
Please list three (3) references who may be contacted

NAME	TITLE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
			(____)
			(____)
			(____)

8. **QUESTIONS:**

Your concise and candid response to the following questions will be very important to the board.

A. What is your principal motivation to be a superintendent and why are you seeking the position in this district?

B. What are your major personal attributes as an administrator which may be an asset to this position?

C. What communication systems/approaches have been most useful to you as a superintendent?

9. **SERVICE RECORD:**
Did you serve in the United States Military during World War II, Korean Conflict or Vietnam Conflict? _____ yes _____ no. If yes, please complete the following:

a.) inclusive dates of service: from _____ to _____
b.) discharge status: _____ honorable _____ other
c.) any related disabilities: _____ yes _____ no

10. **OPEN MEETINGS LAW**

Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate response:

A. Do you wish to have your application materials considered in an open or closed session of the board? open closed

B. If you are interviewed for this position, do you wish to have the interview and deliberations of the board in an open or closed session of the board? open closed

11. **CERTIFICATION**

Do you currently hold a valid Iowa superintendent's endorsement?

_____ Yes _____ No

I hereby certify that the information given in this application form is correct and true.

Signature _____ Date _____

MASTER ROSTER — SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATES

No. Name of Applicant	Address	Letter or application received	Application Form/ Brochure mailed	Completed application form received	Credentials received	Resumé received	Transcript received	Comments

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROCESS RECORD

District _____

Application # _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Material review request:
_____ open, _____ closed meeting
Interview request:
_____ open, _____ closed meeting
Telephone (Home) _____

(Office) _____

Date	ITEM
_____	• Letter or phone inquiry received. Acknowledgement letter sent with Application Form and Brochure
_____	• Application received
_____	• Placement credentials received
_____	• Transcript received
_____	• Resumé received
_____	• Administrator Certification confirmed or qualifying letter received
_____	• Letter sent acknowledging receipt of all documents
_____	• Letter sent requesting missing materials
_____	• Applicant File complete — Placed in Review File
_____	• First screening completed
_____	• First screening completed
_____	• Applicant rejected — "No-interview" letter sent
_____	• First interview scheduled for _____.
_____	• Applicant rejected — "No-second-interview" letter sent
_____	• Final interview scheduled for _____.
_____	• Applicant rejected
_____	• Notified all final applicants that position was filled by whom
_____	• Returned all confidential credentials to placement offices

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Candidate: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: The qualities and qualifications listed below have been agreed upon by the Board of Education as desirable in the superintendent to be selected. Rate the candidate on each item below by circling the appropriate number in the scale; then mark the "OVERALL ASSESSMENT." Complete the form individually without conferring with other members of the screening committee.

Rating Scale:
5 — Superior
4 — Commendable
3 — Competent
2 — Fair
1 — Marginal

	Rating					Notes: Strengths/Weaknesses
I. *Professional Qualifications*						
Level of training	5	4	3	2	1	
Particular administrative strengths sought	5	4	3	2	1	
II. *Experience*						
As a teacher	5	4	3	2	1	
As an administrator	5	4	3	2	1	
Quality of experience	5	4	3	2	1	
Professional recognition	5	4	3	2	1	
Experience in working with diverse groups	5	4	3	2	1	
A record of leadership accomplishments	5	4	3	2	1	
Leadership potential	5	4	3	2	1	
Letters of Recommendation	5	4	3	2	1	
III. *Application Assessment*						
Motivation for superintendency	5	4	3	2	1	
Administrator attributes	5	4	3	2	1	
Communication	5	4	3	2	1	
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	5	4	3	2	1	

"NO-INTERVIEW" LETTER

Dear _____ :

This letter is in reply to your application for the _____ school superintendency.

We regret to inform you that you were not among those selected for an interview. We appreciate your interest in the vacancy and thank you for taking the time to submit an application.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE INTERVIEW CONFIRMATION LETTER

Dear _____ :

This is to confirm that you are scheduled for a preliminary interview for the position of (position) at (time) on (day), (date) at (location).

We are planning to spend about (amount of time) with each of the (number) candidates for the position. Hopefully we will conclude all preliminary interviews by (date).

We are looking forward to seeing you on the (date).

Sincerely,

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of Candidate: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Instructions: Rate the candidate on each item below by circling the appropriate number in the scale and make any notes on your observations of the interview. Complete the form individually without conferring with other members of the board.

Rating Scale:
5 — Superior 4 — Commendable 3 — Competent 2 — Fair 1 — Marginal

Areas	Rating					Notes: Strengths/Weaknesses
Communication Skills Self-expression, oral skills, use of language, inspire trust credibility	5	4	3	2	1	
Board relations, role definitions	5	4	3	2	1	
Problem-Solving Skills and decision-making, conflict resolution	5	4	3	2	1	
Leadership Ability initiative, creativity, enthusiasm, commitment potential	5	4	3	2	1	
Administrative Knowledge and experience, professional stature	5	4	3	2	1	
Curriculum K-12 approach, Academic standards	5	4	3	2	1	
Community Involvement Participation in organizations and activities	5	4	3	2	1	
School organization/operations Fiscal management, negotiations	5	4	3	2	1	
Emotional Stability Maturity, confidence, eye contact	5	4	3	2	1	
Appearance Dress, public presence	5	4	3	2	1	

Overall Evaluation:

_____ This is what we are looking for in our Superintendent.

_____ This could be what we are looking for in our Superintendent.

_____ This is not what we are looking for in our Superintendent.

COMMUNITY VISIT ASSESSMENT FORM

(a Sample)

District Visited: _____ Candidate: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Rate the candidate on each item below by circling the appropriate number in the scale; then mark the "OVERALL ASSESSMENT". Complete the form individually without conferring with other members of the visitation group.

Rating Scale:
5 — Superior
4 — Commendable
3 — Competent
2 — Fair
1 — Marginal

Sample Items	Rating					Comments
1. Board/Superintendent Relations	5	4	3	2	1	
2. Administrative leadership	5	4	3	2	1	
3. Community Involvement	5	4	3	2	1	
4. Problem solving skills	5	4	3	2	1	
5. School-Community Relations	5	4	3	2	1	
6. General Reputation	5	4	3	2	1	
7. Teachers' Opinion of Candidate	5	4	3	2	1	
8. Pupils' Opinion of Candidate	5	4	3	2	1	
9. Parents' Opinion of Candidate	5	4	3	2	1	
10. Educational Leadership/Commitment	5	4	3	2	1	
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	5	4	3	2	1	

IASA/IASB
SAMPLE CONTRACT WITH SUPERINTENDENT

It is hereby agreed by and between the Board of Education of the _____ School District located in _____ County(ies) in the State of Iowa (hereinafter called the "Board"), and _____ as Superintendent for a _____ year period commencing _____, 19 _____.

WITNESSETH, in consideration of a salary of: (strike the inapplicable options)

OPTIONS

A. (One-year contract — first contract must be for not more than one year)

_____ Dollars ($_____)

per year,

B. (Three-year contract when salary is fixed for each year)

_____ Dollars ($_____)

to be paid in the first year,

_____ Dollars ($_____)

to be paid in the second year,

_____ Dollars ($_____)

to be paid in the third year,

C. (Three year contract when salary for only the first year is fixed)

_____ Dollars ($_____)

to be paid for the first one-year period, and a salary to be fixed by the Board of Directors to be paid in each of the remaining years of this Contract (provided, however, that the salary to be paid in each remaining year shall not be less than the salary paid in the first year),

D. (Further, that on or before February 1, this contract may be reopened for consideration of a new three-year contract for the years 19_____-19_____, 19_____-19_____, and 19_____-19_____. The salary for each of said years shall be mutually agreed upon at the time of said reopener, but in any event, the salary for such year shall not be less than the salary for 19_____-19_____, to be paid in equal installments on the _____ day of each calendar/school month for a period of _____ months, or in equal weekly installments for a period of _____ consecutive weeks; the first payment to be made on the _____ day of _____, 19 _____, or in installments payable as follows: _____

_____

FOR SUCH CONSIDERATION, the superintendent agrees to perform the duties of Superintendent and to serve as executive officer of the Board and to have powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board or by law.

AND IT IS FURTHER AGREED:

1. The Superintendent shall furnish throughout the life of this contract a valid and appropriate certificate to act as Superintendent in the State of Iowa as directed by the Board and the Superintendent hereby agrees to devote time, skill, labor and attention to said employment during the term of this contract. Provided, however, that the Superintendent, with the approval of the Board may undertake consultative work, speaking engagements, writing, lecturing, or other professional duties and obligations.

2. The Board shall provide the Superintendent with periodic opportunities to discuss Superintendent/Board relationships and to discuss the Superintendent's personal records and performance at reasonable times set by the Superintendent or the Board president.

3. *OPTIONS* (strike the inapplicable options)

A. The Board shall provide the Superintendent with transportation required in the performance of official duties during employment under this contract.

B. The Board shall allow the Superintendent _____ cents (. _____) per mile (Should not exceed mileage rate of public officials established by statute) for use of a personal car for travel in the transaction of official school business and shall reimburse the Superintendent authorized travel within the School District. The Superintendent shall also be authorized for personal expense incidental to the travel when an itemized statement of travel and expense is submitted to the Board and the expenditure is approved by the Board.

C. That upon submission of claims, the Superintendent shall be allowed a maximum of _____ Dollars ($ _____) per year in addition to salary hereinbefore stated as reimbursement of the use of the Superintendent's personal car in the transaction of official school business within the school District.

4. The Superintendent shall receive _____ (_____) days of vacation annually exclusive of legal holidays, which shall be taken within the twelve months of the year in which it is earned unless the Board grants an extension. In the event this contract terminates prior to its termination date, the Superintendent shall receive pay for vacation days accumulated and unused for the preceding year and on a pro rata basis for the final part of the year in which the contract terminates.

5. The Superintendent shall be entitled to _____ (_____) days of sick leave per year, which may be accumulated to a total of _____ (_____) days.

6. Deductions for absence (other leave) for which pay is not allowed shall be made in an amount equal to the pay for one day of service for each day of absence.

7. The Board at the request of the Superintendent and in accordance with the provisions of Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code and Section 279.16 of the Code of Iowa and related statutory tax law shall withhold and transfer an amount of salary annually, semi-annually, or monthly, said amount to be determined by the Superintendent, permitting the Superintendent to participate in accordance with applicable statutes, if so desired, in a tax-deferred annuity program of the Superintendent's choosing.

8. The Superintendent shall attend appropriate professional meetings at the local, state, and national levels, and shall be reimbursed for actual expense in carrying out professional activities in accordance with the adopted line item budget and when an authorized statement is submitted and approved by the Board.

9. The Superintendent with the prior approval of the Board shall be allowed time for attending summer school at a recognized college or university in excess of any allowable vacation without loss of salary.

10. The Superintendent shall receive the following insurance benefits:

_____

_____

_____

11. It is understood and agreed the Superintendent as executive officer of the Board shall be in charge of School District affairs; and the Board, individually and collectively will refer matters before the Board to the Superintendent for study and recommendation. Howeved, this shall not prevent the Board from taking immediate action on matters before the Board if the Board desires.

12. Other: _____

_____

_____

Dated this _____ day of _____ , 19 _____ .

_____ School District

By _____

President, Board of Directors

By _____

Superintendent of Schools

This contract form is based upon a form jointly developed and approved by the Iowa Association of School Administrators and the Iowa Association of School Boards.

Alternative Provisions

Moving Expenses

The Board shall reimburse the Superintendent for expenses incurred in moving family, furniture, and household goods, and related personal belongings from _____ to __ , such expenses not to exceed _____ Dollars ($ _____).

Superintendent's Residence

The Superintendent for the convenience of the Board of Education and as a condition of his/her employment to insure the efficient operation, management, and supervision of the _____ School District with which he/she is charged is required to reside in the house owned by the _____ School District located at _____ .

The Superintendent/Board shall pay the cost of utilities including electricity, water, sewer, fuel and telephone. The Board shall pay maintenance costs, real property taxes and special assessments if any, and real property insurance costs on the house.

Transition Provisions

The Superintendent, at his/her discretion, may spend not more than _____ days prior to _____ , 19 _____ , as a consultant to the district. Such consultation shall not exceed the number of days specified unless additional days are authorized by the Board. The School District will compensate the Superintendent for such consultation at the rate of $ _____ per day for days spent consulting with the District. The District will also pay actual expenses for travel, lodging and meals. Mileage will be paid at the rate of ____ cents per mile. An itemized statement of consultation time and expenses shall be furnished by the Superintendent. For such time period, the Superintendent will be serving the School District as an independent consultant and will be free to schedule the days when he/she will be consulting with the District. Because the consulting may require meetings with the Board and in order for the Board to comply with the requirements of the Iowa Open Meetings Law, the Superintendent shall give at least 72 hours' notice to the president of the Board when the Superintendent's presence in the District may require a meeting with the Board. Otherwise, the Superintendent is free to dispose of the time, energy and skill required by the consulting responsibilities in such manner as the Superintendent sees fit. During the period of such consultation, the Superintendent will not be considered as having an employee status or as being entitled to participate in any group insurance arrangements, retirement plans or other benefits of the District. This paragraph is effective as of the date of execution and approval of the contract by the School Board.

Formal Evaluation

The Superintendent shall be formally evaluated by the Board at least on an annual basis. The evaluation form and procedure will be adopted by the Board following a review and discussion with the Superintendent.